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CURRENT OPINION

Life and Death in the Trenches

After months of experience with the soldiers in hospitals, dugouts, huts, and trenches, in the actual business of war on the fields of France, it is still possible for Dr. John Kelman, minister of St. George's Church, Edinburgh, to speak with enthusiastic optimism of the influence of the war upon the lives of the fighters. Dr. Kelman is a chaplain in the British army. His thrilling appreciation of the fighting young manhood found in the front line is printed in the July number of the *Missionary Review of the World*.

Death is always within call. The bombardment is continual. The British guns, which at the opening of the war were able to answer a twenty-four hour bombardment with only three shells, are now able to pour into a section of a trench half a mile long as many as 500,000 shells in one day. Dr. Kelman praises the remarkable heroism and chivalry of the youth of the air service, but his work has been with the men in the trenches. "All the best and noblest lads," he says "that we have managed to rear this generation are there in the great melting pot of the war, and in the great crucible of the future many things are being transformed. Men meet as brothers, bound together, not only by a common service of the highest and noblest kind, but knit together by a common sacrifice and suffering in which man is heart to heart with man. The ex-convict is sharing the same bell-tent with the student of divinity." Here in the fury and glory of war, under the shadow of death, a new humanity is being molded.

Dr. Kelman enumerates the things which enter into the transformation of the youth as he comes to his new manhood in the trenches. First, there is the discipline and impersonal attitude of the war machine. Each man knows that he counts for only his

real human worth. Next comes the dreariness of the trenches. "That is something to make your heart bleed! The musketry and the shrapnel, the wet mud in your eyes, so that you can hardly see, mud in your mouth till you can't tell the difference between beef and mutton, mud in the soul of you till everything looks drab and the whole world the color of khaki, mud in the heart of you till you grow stupid with it all and all the brilliance of life fades away and leaves you benumbed." Add, next, the horror! And the horror of a great war is beyond all imaginable things. Then comes the strange loneliness, so that men long just to touch each other's sleeve. Last of all in the list of influences is placed the omnipresence of death. "The graveyard is waiting for these men. I have looked over the periscope of my trench across 'no man's land' where 500 corpses in khaki had lain for five months." Out of all this comes a manhood that is glorious in undreamed heroism. "Death has overshot itself and familiarity has ended men's fear of it. The courage of the men is beyond all speech. I think every man who goes up there is afraid, but not of the thing he is expecting to fear. It is the fear of fear. I have never yet found a man who was really afraid when it came to the point." Not trained military men, but bankers, clerks, barbers, carpenters, salesmen, hairdressers, etc., suddenly placed in these extraordinary conditions reveal a magnificent courage which no one would have dreamed existed in any land today. "These are some of the fine things war has done amid its frightful record of evil things."

The vices of the soldier's life are not nearly so common as the mind of the layman imagines. The boys are remarkably free from wrongdoing, and they will come out of the fight not brutalized nor even hardened.

They are in the fight with a moral motive; they have heard the call of country, home, and God, and they will come back out of the evil things of the war throwing them off "like a blood-stained cloak."

The men at the front are religious, but in a mystical rather than in a church way. They are seeing strange visions of the White Christ. They think of Jesus, not as a great church figure, not as a far-off being in a special class, but as a brother. "Into their experience of sacrifice today comes the great Christ of the Cross, and these men, who once lived in self-indulgence, realize suddenly that Christ is their brother." This experience of suffering and sacrifice for others is transforming men. At this point Dr. Kelman stops with a note of anxiety, as he wonders whether the church will be wise enough to build upon these facts a nobler life. "God knows whether we shall be able sufficiently to understand, to follow, and to rise to the tremendous occasion."

The Problem of Christian Unity

A great deal of space is given in the current religious periodicals to the problem of uniting the forces of Christendom to face the overwhelming needs of the new world emerging from the purging fires of the war. The Right Rev. Bishop Welldon, in the *Contemporary Review* for July, insists that something must be done at once. He points out that the churches have come together on a common platform in some phases of religious work; that they are able to plan for harmonious action in moral and spiritual activities at home and in missions abroad. But this is not enough—the barriers which part church from church and Christian from Christian in the offices of public, divine worship must be broken down. The special urgency and seriousness of the situation come from changes resulting from the war. It has aroused the feeling of sorrow, if not of shame at the moral and spiritual waste which results from division.

The men who return from the war, after having come into intimate contact with all creeds and religions in the fighting forces, will be impatient and intolerant of trivialities such as have been the center of disputes in the Christian world. The Y.M.C.A. will have demonstrated to them the possibility of united Christian effort. They will demand that the church justify itself in the new world which will be born after the war by its unity and its utility.

Bishop Welldon does not hope that Rome will be able to enter into any scheme of union, but feels that there is a possibility that the Holy Orthodox church of the East may be able to meet the churches of the West. The main point of separation in all discussions of union between the Church of England and the Presbyterian and the other non-conformist churches is the matter of Episcopal ordination. He thinks that the latter "need not logically feel themselves debarred from an assent to episcopacy." On the other hand, "the Church of England, if insisting on union only on an episcopal basis, may naturally inquire what process of episcopal ordination would be least exposed to criticism, which is only too sure to arise among Presbyterian and non-conformist churches, which, in the absence of episcopacy, have been signally and vitally blessed by the favor of God." Some way of bringing the churches together must be found. "Things cannot remain as they are, or they cannot so remain without grave injury to all the churches. It is idle to argue that the churches ought to be one when they are not one. There must be some change, not only in their spirit, but also in their organization."

"Why does the movement for church unity lag?" asks Dr. E. H. Delk in the *Church Union Quarterly* for July, and answers briefly (1) because of precedent—a man's religious life usually flourishes best in the church of his forbears; (2) because of preoccupation—the average bishop and

minister are too absorbed in their own parish and narrow field of work to consider the larger problems; (3) because of prejudgment—not one man in ten is willing to open the whole case and consider the problem in a historical and scholarly way; (4) because of pride of mind and pride of heart; (5) because of possession—the holding of power and position naturally puts individuals and classes on the defensive when it is proposed to relinquish or to share property and power with others.

A combination of optimism, common sense, and mysticism enters into the burning plea of Dr. Peter Ainslie, president of the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity, in an article which appears in the *Constructive Quarterly* for June. He argues that in the face of the enormous waste of division common sense is clamoring for union and that thousands of all communions are anxiously desiring it. It is absolutely impossible for any communion in Christendom either to conquer the world or to produce the best type of Christianity that the world is capable of producing. "Comity must succeed rivalry; co-operation must succeed competition, and love must be the distinctive peculiarity of Christianity before either the final move is made for world conquest or before the best flower of Christian faith is produced on earth. Neither Greek Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, nor Protestantism can last as they are now. All these divisions have in them the prophecy of death, but love and help and government and freedom and kindness are as immortal as God." Dr. Ainslie does not think federation is the solution of the problem, though federations will help. Christians must be willing to be lifted out of formal Christianity and to have the emphasis placed on the activities of vital Christianity with faith in Jesus and love for man as the dominating principles of life. This is the important thing. Forms and ceremonies are not religion; theologies are

not religion. Neither baptism nor the historic episcopate can be valid reasons for separation. Faith in Christ and love among believers will solve the problem, and its solution is as inevitable as the coming of the evening stars to the sky.

In the *Constructive Quarterly* for June appears also an article from the pen of Dr. F. J. Foakes Jackson, now of Union Theological Seminary, who speaks from a long experience in the education of ministers in England. He points out the folly of expecting union through influencing the older men, who are in prominent positions and who have learned to love the peculiarities of their own denominations and to whom present problems are unreal, while old problems of separation loom like mountains. The hope lies in the education of the youths who are to take the leadership of the churches. The social and evangelistic work of such organizations as the Y.M.C.A. and the Student Movement is a means of unification, but a great and vital uniting force is scholarship. Men educated together at a great center of learning will understand each other better and be more sympathetic than those secluded in denominational schools. Most of the things a clergyman needs to learn are non-denominational and do not need to be held exclusively to church schools. Scholarship will break down the barriers.

The men among whom the true principle of unity exists are genuine scholars. Whatever prejudices one may have in favor of certain doctrines, views of government, even principles of morality, one has to give attention to the written and spoken opinions of opponents provided they are backed by real knowledge. . . . Even amid all the bitterness engendered by this world-war, scholarship has to remain international. It is, in fact, one of the few things which rise superior to all the unnatural divisions dividing the human race. . . . As I believe nineteen-twentieths of the difficulties of bringing Christians together are due to ignorance, the best remedy is better education in

theology given in common to men of the various churches.

The case for federation as a basis on which to build the structure of union is presented by Dr. Charles S. Macfarland, general secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, in an intensely interesting sketch of the progress of federation, which appears in the July number of the *American Journal of Theology*. It is mainly a historical narrative of the steps leading up to the organization of the Federal Council and in inspiring exposition of the multitudinous phases of co-operation in Christian work directed by the commissions of the council. There are also, however, some trenchant statements on the question of Christian unity. From his experience in the council, Dr. Macfarland believes that Christian unity at work is the absolutely necessary preliminary of any conferences on faith and order—in fact, the chief way to get unity is to get a common social task and to stop discussing Christian unity. The Federal Council represents a unity which is not uniformity and a diversity which is not divisiveness. Federal unity is more vital and stronger than the unity of the church of Rome, because it is a unity with freedom and because unity is stronger without uniformity than with it. Two principles of progress characterize the Federal unity—differentiation and coherence. Dr. Macfarland says:

It is simply genuine co-operation without regard to the ultimate result to ourselves. It is not trying to get men to think alike or to think together. It is first willing that the army should be composed of various regiments with differing uniforms, with differing banners, and even, if necessary, with different bands of music at appropriate intervals, provided that they move together, face the same way, uphold each other, and fight the common foe—the sin of the world—with a common love of the Master of their souls, for each other, and for mankind. It is unity without uniformity; diversity without divisiveness; comprehensiveness not competition or compulsion.

Federal unity is denominationalism in co-operation. The churches have discovered two great truths which drive them into union in service: (1) that the time has come to transcend the denominational demand for freedom by giving up some of their dearly-bought freedom for the sake of the common good; (2) that man has been incredibly and shockingly wasteful of material resources, of human energy, of human life, and, worst of all, of moral powers, of emotions and religious enthusiasms. This last waste has been caused by "sectarian divisions, denominational rivalries and unrestrained caprice often deluding itself as a religious loyalty." The most serious profligacy of the churches has been the neglect to cultivate their ultimate power—the power of religious enthusiasms and spiritual impulses—because they were neither socially concentrated nor socially interpreted and applied. The Federal Council does not weaken denominationalism, but makes it more efficient and serviceable. The sectarian spirit is weakened, but the Christian spirit of love and serviceableness is enlarged and embodied in the united effort.

The Elements of a Just and Durable Peace

In time of war prepare for peace. Writers in America seem especially anxious that value shall be received for the terrible toll of the war in the form of a secure stabilization of the world when peace is made. In the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* for July the elements of a just and durable peace are set forth by Philip Marshall Brown. We should recognize that peace is not the supreme aim of society. Peace, like character and virtue, is a result and comes through warfare with vice and injustice. The supreme aim of society is not peace, but the triumph of justice. The object of a great war like the present should be an enduring

peace; and an enduring peace cannot be found unless it be based on sound principles. In the main these principles are: (1) the recognition of the rights of nationalities; (2) the right to self-government; and (3) regulated freedom of trade. "The threat of the entente allies to continue an economic warfare against Germany at the end of the present conflict should be viewed with alarm by all friends of world peace."

The essential elements of a just and durable peace, Mr. Brown thinks, would be: (1) the necessity of common conceptions of rights and obligations, of justice and injustice among nations; (2) the clear determination of the fundamental rights of nations in accordance with the principles of nationalism, self-government, and freedom of trade; (3) the clear determination of all other rights of nations by mutual agreement; (4) there shall be no collective coercion of nations by international police, or by any form of international executive before their rights shall be clearly determined; (5) the protection of such rights must be accorded in such a way that there shall be no menace to the freedom of men to pursue their legitimate national ends.

The great task of the United States now must be to make certain that no peace is entered into in defiance of the principle of international justice. To her also may belong the gigantic task of education and conciliation, so that nations may understand each other; she should show the way to the world by organizing a reign of justice and peace in her own hemisphere through the Pan-American Union. "We should be on our guard lest the realization of the horrors of war should create an atmosphere of hysteria around the supreme problem of international justice. Horrible as war is, it must not prompt us to recommend expedients for peace which might involve any fundamental denial of justice. We must remember that there are horrors of peace as well as of war. Where vice and wickedness

flourish, where injustice reigns unrestrained, it is criminal to insist on enduring peace." We must recognize, furthermore, that nothing is permanent. There can be no perpetual peace. "It may be striven for only through eternal conflict with wrong; and to secure the triumph of justice between nations, men at times must be willing and eager to fight."

Of a different tenor but with the same idea of the necessity of preparing wisely for peace, is the lecture handed out to the pacifists by Professor John Dewey under the caption, "The Future of Pacifism," in the *New Republic* of July 28. The American people are profoundly pacifist and yet are at the present time impatient of the activities of many professed and professional pacifists. The pacifist propaganda failed to decide the course of a nation converted to pacifism in advance. The chief reason for the failure of the pacifist is that he has no program. He should have seen that America never was and never could be morally neutral. He should have seen that the messages to Germany after the Lusitania and Sussex disasters could mean nothing but war if Germany persisted in her program. Yet "the pacifist literature of the months preceding our entrance into the war was opportunistic, breathlessly, frantically so. It did not deal in the higher strategy of international politics but in immediate day-by-day tactics for staving off the war." The attitude of the pacifist seemed to be that if no nation ever allowed itself to be drawn into war, then wars would cease to be. Only one pacifist was able to define pacifism in a positive way. Miss Jane Addams argued for an active, energetic type, seeking "to urge upon the United States not indifference to moral issues and to the fate of liberty and democracy, but a strenuous endeavor to lead all nations of the earth into an organized international life." Others were treating symptoms rather than attacking the disease.

The pacifists still have their chance. If they had been wise, instead of blindly refusing to face the fact of the impending necessity of war, they would have laid down the conditions and objects of our entrance into the war. They missed this precious opportunity. Will they be wiser now? Instead of declaiming against war in general and against this war in particular, instead of trying to stop it, why not determine the terms on which it is to be stopped? To one who can see, it is evident that the war has given an immense impetus to reorganization and, still more important, has made it necessary for the nations to draw together in intimate and far-reaching international combinations. The future of pacifism lies in the creation of new agencies of international control and in seeing that the war is used to bring these agencies to reality. "The present task of the constructive pacifist is to call attention away from the catchwords which so easily in war-time become the substitutes for both fact and ideas back to the realities. In view of the devastation of Serbia and of Belgium, the rights of small nations tend to become an end in itself. . . . To get no further than setting up more small nationalities on the map is almost wilfully to provoke future wars." The isolated, national sovereignty of even large nations has been rendered an anachronism

by the new industry and commerce. Questions of food supply, of coal and iron, of lines of railway and ship-transportation are much more important for the making and ordering of states than the principle of isolated nationality large or small. The interests of pacifism are bound up with securing the organs by which these economic interests and energies may be articulated. These forces cannot be suppressed. They are the moving and controlling forces of the modern world. The question of peace or war is whether they are to continue to work furtively, blindly, and by those tricks of manipulation which have constituted the game of international diplomacy, or whether they are to be frankly recognized and the political system accommodated to them. Military men and statesmen, together with some historians and political economists, are still thinking in terms of the seventeenth century when the modern sovereign nations were formed. "Too many influential personages are pure romanticists. They are expressing ideals which no longer have anything to do with facts." If the pacifists will command the future, they should work now for a future-world arrangement which will give free play to those economic forces which are actually shaping the associations and organizations of men.